



General Assembly

Distr.
GENERAL

A/CONF.189/PC.2/6
30 March 2001

Original: ENGLISH AND
FRENCH

**WORLD CONFERENCE AGAINST RACISM,
RACIAL DISCRIMINATION, XENOPHOBIA
AND RELATED INTOLERANCE**

Preparatory Committee
Second session
Geneva, 21 May-1 June 2001
Item 5 of the provisional agenda

**REPORTS OF PREPARATORY MEETINGS AND ACTIVITIES AT
THE INTERNATIONAL, REGIONAL AND NATIONAL LEVELS**

**Final documents of the European Conference against Racism
(Strasbourg, France, 11-13 October 2000)**

Note by the Secretary-General

The Secretary-General has the honour to transmit to the Preparatory Committee the Political Declaration, the General Conclusions and the General Report of the European Conference against Racism.

CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
I. POLITICAL DECLARATION	3
II. GENERAL CONCLUSIONS	8
A. Introduction	8
B. Context	8
C. Conclusions and recommendations	10
D. Cooperation at European and international level	25
III. GENERAL REPORT	26

13 October 2000

I. POLITICAL DECLARATION

WE, THE GOVERNMENTS OF THE MEMBER STATES OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE, ON THE OCCASION OF THE EUROPEAN CONFERENCE "ALL DIFFERENT ALL EQUAL: FROM PRINCIPLE TO PRACTICE", EUROPEAN CONTRIBUTION TO THE WORLD CONFERENCE AGAINST RACISM, RACIAL DISCRIMINATION, XENOPHOBIA AND RELATED INTOLERANCE,

STRASBOURG, 11-13 OCTOBER 2000

Reaffirm that:

Europe is a community of shared values, multicultural in its past, present and future; tolerance guarantees Europe's pluralist and open society, in which cultural diversity is promoted;

All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights and with a potential to contribute constructively to the development and well-being of our societies;

All persons are equal before the law and are entitled to the equal protection of the law;

Full and effective implementation of all human rights without any discrimination or distinction, as enshrined in European and other international human rights instruments, must be secured;

Racism and racial discrimination are serious violations of human rights in the contemporary world and must be combated by all lawful means;

Racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance threaten democratic societies and their fundamental values;

Stability and peace in Europe and throughout the world can only be built on tolerance and respect for diversity;

Equal dignity of all human beings and the rule of law must be respected and equality of opportunity promoted;

The fight against marginalization and social exclusion must be continued;

All initiatives aiming at greater political, social and cultural participation, especially of persons belonging to vulnerable groups, should be encouraged;

All States must draw lessons from manifestations of racism in Europe and in other regions of the world;

Suffering caused by slavery or which arose from colonialism must be remembered;

All States must reject ethnic and religious cleansing and genocide, in Europe and in other regions of the world, and work together to prevent their recurrence;

The Holocaust must never be forgotten.

We are conscious of and alarmed at:

The continued and violent occurrence of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, anti-Semitism and related intolerance, including contemporary forms of slavery, in Europe and in other regions of the world, despite efforts undertaken by the international community and national governments;

The fact that such occurrences target, notably on grounds related to language, religion or national or ethnic origin, persons such as migrants, asylum-seekers, refugees, displaced persons, non-nationals, indigenous peoples; or, on grounds related to belonging to minorities, persons such as Roma/Gypsies and Travellers;

The related degrading treatment and discriminatory practices;

The existence of multiple discrimination;

The persistence and development of aggressive nationalism and ethnocentrism which can lead to serious and large-scale violations of human rights;

The recent examples of ethnic and religious cleansing in Europe and in other regions of the world;

The continued occurrence, in many forms, of intolerance on grounds of religion and belief;

The dangers of indifference to manifestations of racism;

The hostility expressed by certain media and politicians towards vulnerable groups;

The support for political parties and organisations disseminating xenophobic ideology in Europe and in other regions of the world;

The use of new technologies of mass communication for the dissemination of racist messages.

We note with satisfaction:

The contribution of the United Nations, in particular through the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and the action of its High Commissioner for Human Rights in combating racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance;

The key role of the Council of Europe in combating racism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism and intolerance as affirmed at the highest political level and demonstrated by:

- the European Convention on Human Rights and its additional Protocols, as well as the European Court of Human Rights and its case law;
- the adoption by the Committee of Ministers of Protocol No. 12 to the Convention, which introduces a general prohibition of discrimination;
- the Organisation's other human rights and legal instruments providing for equality and non-discrimination, including the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities;
- the action of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI);
- the contribution of the Commissioner for Human Rights;

The European Union's commitment to combat racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance across the range of its policies, notably through the European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia, the anti-discrimination regulations in the Treaty establishing the European Community and other relevant EC legislation, in particular Council Directive 2000/43 implementing the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of racial or ethnic origin, as well as global activities in this regard;

The results of the "All different all equal" European Youth Campaign against Racism and of the European Year against Racism;

The contribution of the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), including the activities of its High Commissioner on National Minorities, its Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights and its Representative on Freedom of the Media;

The contribution of non-governmental organisations and other actors of civil society to combating racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance throughout Europe;

The efforts made at national and local levels to take preventive action to combat racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, especially in promoting human rights education, including intercultural education.

We therefore commit ourselves:

To take further steps, having in mind in particular the General Conclusions of the European Conference, to prevent and eliminate racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, anti-Semitism and related intolerance, and to monitor and evaluate such action on a regular basis. These shall include:

Legal measures

- to implement fully and effectively at national level the relevant universal and European human rights instruments and to consider signing and ratifying , as soon as, and wherever, possible without reservations, those instruments for which such action has not yet been taken;
- to adopt and implement, wherever necessary, national legislation and administrative measures that expressly and specifically counter racism and prohibit racial discrimination in all spheres of public life;
- to guarantee equality to all without discrimination as to origin, by ensuring equality of opportunity;
- to assure to all victims of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance adequate information, support and national legal, administrative and judicial remedies;
- to bring to justice those responsible for racist acts and the violence to which they give rise, ensuring the prohibition of racial discrimination in the enjoyment of the right to freedom of expression;
- to combat all forms of expression which incite racial hatred as well as to take action against the dissemination of such material in the media in general and on the internet in particular;

Policy measures

- to establish national policies and action plans to combat racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, anti-Semitism and related intolerance, including through the creation of independent specialised national institutions with competence in this field, or reinforcing such existing institutions;
- to pay specific attention to the treatment of persons belonging to vulnerable groups and to persons who suffer discrimination on multiple grounds;
- to integrate a gender perspective in policies and action to combat racism with a view to empowering women belonging to vulnerable groups to claim respect for their rights in all spheres of public and private life;
- to create conditions for the promotion and protection of the ethnic, cultural, linguistic and religious identity of persons belonging to national minorities where such minorities exist;
- to counter social exclusion and marginalization, in particular by providing equal access to education, employment and housing;

- to ensure the development of specific measures, which actively involve the host society and encourage respect for cultural diversity, to promote fair treatment for non-nationals and to facilitate their integration into social, cultural, political and economic life;
- to pay increased attention to the non-discriminatory treatment of non-nationals detained by public authorities;
- to reflect on the effective access of all members of the community, including members of vulnerable groups, to the decision-making processes in society, in particular at local level;
- to develop effective policies and implementation mechanisms and exchange good practices for the full achievement of equality for Roma/Gypsies and Travellers;

Educational and training measures:

- to give particular attention to education and awareness-raising in all sectors of society to promote a climate of tolerance, respect for human rights and cultural diversity, including introducing and strengthening such measures among young people;
- to ensure that adequate training and awareness-raising programmes are implemented for public officials such as the police and other law enforcement officers, judges, prosecutors, personnel of the prison system and of the armed forces, customs and immigration officers as well as teachers and health and social welfare services personnel;
- to combat ethnic and religious cleansing in Europe and in other regions of the world;
- to support non-governmental organisations, strengthening the dialogue with them, with the social partners and other actors in civil society and to involve them more closely in elaborating and implementing policies and programmes designed to combat racism and xenophobia;
- to consider how best to reinforce European bodies active in combating racism, discrimination and related intolerance, in particular the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance;
- to enhance cooperation between relevant European and international institutions so as mutually to reinforce their respective action to combat racism.

16 October 2000

II. GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

A. Introduction

The European Conference "All different, all equal: from principle to practice" is meeting between 11 and 13 October 2000 in Strasbourg, France, at the headquarters of the Council of Europe. It constitutes Europe's regional contribution to the World Conference against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance.

The European Conference brings together governments from across Europe, in particular the Council of Europe's 41 member States. States with Observer status to the Council of Europe participate in the conference and governments belonging to the Western European and Other Group (WEOG) and Eastern European Group are represented. Council of Europe bodies, including the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI), institutions of the European Union, *inter alia* its European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia (EUMC), and the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), are taking part. The United Nations, most importantly its High Commissioner for Human Rights, together with its human rights treaty monitoring bodies and mechanisms, is actively contributing, as well as UN specialised agencies and other relevant international organisations. National institutions dealing with racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, especially independent national specialised bodies in this field, non-governmental organisations and media professionals are further contributing to the European Conference. A Forum for Non-Governmental Organisations immediately preceded the European Conference.

The European Conference is adopting General Conclusions, which are reproduced below. Furthermore, Ministers of Council of Europe member States are adopting a Political Declaration, with which other participating States at the conference may associate themselves. The Political Declaration is reproduced separately.

B. Context

The European Conference welcomes ethnic, religious, cultural and linguistic diversity in Europe as a source of social vitality which should be embraced, valued and enjoyed by all Europeans because it enriches and enhances our lives, our ideas, our creativity and our politics. It is also essential for Europe's economic prosperity as well as social success, through drawing on all available talents.

The European Conference affirms that the strengthening of democratic values and respect for human rights requires constructing a society in which all people, regardless of their origin, enjoy the same rights and opportunities.

The European Conference believes that all States must acknowledge the suffering caused by slavery and colonialism. It further believes all States must reject ethnic and religious cleansing and genocide, in Europe and in other regions of the world, and work together to prevent their recurrence. The European Conference also believes that the Holocaust must never be forgotten.

The European Conference recognises the continued and widespread occurrence of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, anti-Semitism and related intolerance. It further recognises that such occurrences target, notably on grounds related to language, religion or national or ethnic origin, persons such as migrants, asylum-seekers, refugees, displaced persons, non-nationals and indigenous peoples; or, on grounds related to belonging to minorities, persons such as Roma/Gypsies and Travellers. It is also aware of the multiple discrimination suffered by some persons, including on grounds of race, colour, ethnic or linguistic origin, gender, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion or culture. All such persons are henceforth referred to as targeted groups.

The European Conference furthermore recognises the persistence for targeted persons of the following problems in particular:

- the "everyday" discrimination that exists in employment, housing, education, services and so on;
- the lack or, more often, inadequacy of effective anti-discrimination provisions;
- the occurrence of contemporary forms of slavery, in Europe and in other parts of the world, despite the efforts undertaken by the international community and national governments;
- the incitement to discrimination against immigrants, asylum-seekers and refugees, on the part of certain media outlets and politicians;
- the discrimination faced by immigrants, asylum-seekers and refugees, and the growth of often violent racism and xenophobia against them, as well as their criminalization;
- continuing manifestations of racial or ethnic violence and incitement to racial or ethnic hatred or intolerance;
- the proliferation and growth of extremist groups exacerbating these phenomena of hostility and violence;
- in some cases, the existence of certain forms of racism and prejudice in State institutions, direct and indirect;
- a "banalisation" of racism and intolerance: while the notion of racism as a theory based on the so-called superiority of a race or ethnic group over another is no longer so pronounced, theories of supposedly insurmountable cultural differences between groups can be observed;
- a rise in religious intolerance;

- violent acts against members of Jewish communities and dissemination of anti-Semitic material;
- persisting prejudice and discrimination against Roma/Gypsies;
- the use of new technologies of mass communication by racist individuals and groups.

In condemning these phenomena, the European Conference is aware that most of them are experienced not only in Europe but also in other regions.

To act to eradicate racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, anti-Semitism and related intolerance, the European Conference proposes through its General Conclusions a series of measures, some of which may also be considered useful outside Europe. In exchanging its experiences with other regions in this respect, the European Conference emphasises the priority of action at national and local level, and by government in conjunction with civil society.

C. Conclusions and recommendations of the European Conference against Racism

LEGAL PROTECTION

1. The European Conference reaffirms that acts of racism and racial discrimination are serious violations of human rights and should be combated by all lawful means.

Acceptance and full implementation of relevant international legal instruments

2. The European Conference calls upon all States, and notably all member States of the Council of Europe, to consider, if they have not already done so, to sign and ratify the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD), and to make the declaration under Article 14 of that Convention on the right of individual petition, as well as all other relevant universal and regional international instruments relating to the protection of human rights, and to ensure their full and effective application at national level.¹

3. The European Conference further calls upon all States to ensure that no reservation is contrary to the object and purpose of these instruments, to review existing reservations to these instruments with a view to withdrawing them, to comply with the relevant reporting obligations under these instruments and to publicise and act upon the concluding observations of the relevant supervisory mechanisms.

¹ International and European legal instruments relevant to combating racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance are listed in Appendix I.

4. The European Conference recognises the need to provide effective protection from acts or situations involving racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance also in times of armed conflict. It stresses the importance of international humanitarian law, which contains many specific non-discrimination rules binding on parties to an armed conflict.

New developments at European and international levels

5. The European Conference welcomes the adoption by the Council of the European Union of a directive prohibiting discrimination on grounds of racial or ethnic origin. It believes that such legislative measures can make a valuable contribution to the fight against racism and xenophobia.

6. The European Conference also welcomes the adoption of Protocol No. 12 to the European Convention on Human Rights broadening, in a general fashion, the field of application of Article 14 (non-discrimination). It calls upon member States of the Council of Europe to consider signing and ratifying it without delay and to implement fully its provisions.

7. The European Conference underlines the importance of combating impunity, including for crimes with a racist or xenophobic motivation, also at international level. In this respect, it fully supports the work of the existing International Criminal Tribunals and the adoption of the Statute of the International Criminal Court. It calls upon all States which have not yet done so to sign and ratify the latter.

General and comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation at national level

8. For purposes of effectively combating racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance in the civil, political, economic, social and cultural fields, the European Conference recommends to all participating States that the national legislative framework in criminal, civil and administrative law should expressly and specifically prohibit discrimination on grounds of actual or presumed racial, ethnic or national origin, religion and belief and provide effective judicial and other remedies or redress, including through the designation of national, independent, specialised bodies. Such legislation should embrace the concepts of direct and indirect discrimination. It should cover such areas as employment, education, housing, health care, social protection and social security, social benefits, access to the supply of goods and services and to public places as well as access to citizenship. This legislation should clearly cover the functions of public bodies and authorities such as law enforcement personnel, judges and prosecutors, other components in the criminal justice system, local authority enforcement powers, health and safety bodies, child protection, detention under mental health legislation and tax collection, as well as the private sector.

Application of the law and provision of effective remedies

9. To reinforce protection against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, the European Conference calls upon participating States to ensure that all persons have access to effective and adequate remedies and enjoy the right to seek from competent tribunals just and adequate reparation or satisfaction for any damage suffered as a result of such discrimination.

10. In improving the effectiveness of criminal law in combating racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, the European Conference draws attention to a number of measures participating States could consider. These may include:

- ensuring the criminal prosecution of offences of a racist or xenophobic nature is given a high priority and is actively and consistently undertaken. In this connection, the European Conference underlines the importance of fostering awareness and providing training to the various agents in the criminal justice system to ensure the fair and impartial application of the law;
- ensuring that racist and xenophobic acts are stringently punished, by allowing the racist or xenophobic motives of the offender to be specifically taken into account;
- in accordance with relevant international instruments, and in particular Articles 10 and 11 of the European Convention on Human Rights, ensuring that appropriate and efficient measures are taken to combat racist organisations, as well as to criminalize oral, written, audio-visual and other forms of expression, inciting to hatred, discrimination or violence against targeted groups or persons because of their actual or presumed racial, ethnic or national origin or religion;
- making the offence of Holocaust-denial punishable;
- empowering courts to impose, in addition to the main penalty, ancillary penalties such as fines or community service;
- prosecuting acts of a racist or xenophobic nature *ex officio*;
- allowing complainants of racist and xenophobic acts to opt for mediation in criminal cases, particularly where the parties are individuals.

11. The European Conference underlines the importance of access to the law and to the courts for complainants of racism and racial discrimination. With this in mind, it draws attention to the need for judicial and other remedies such legislation should provide to be widely known, easily accessible, expeditious, and not unduly complicated. Among particular measures the European Conference proposes participating States should consider are:

- in certain circumstances, shifting the burden of proof to the defendant in non-penal proceedings - when the plaintiff has established factual evidence of less favourable treatment caused by apparent discrimination;
- ensuring that adequate legal assistance, including legal aid, is available to complainants of discrimination when seeking a legal remedy;
- ensuring the protection against victimisation of complainants of and witnesses to discrimination;

- affording the possibility for non-governmental organisations to support complainants of racism, with their consent, in legal procedures;
- promoting sustained measures to ensure that all members of targeted groups are aware of the remedies available and how to make use of them;
- informing the broader public about legislation to combat racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, anti-Semitism and religious discrimination, so that its effects in terms of access to the courts and compensation are supplemented by an educational impact on the general public;
- promoting sustained measures to ensure that persons belonging to targeted groups who have been victims of gender-related crimes, such as rape and other forms of sexual and domestic violence, forced prostitution and trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation, are granted adequate legal protection and support, empowered to take action and protected from racism, xenophobia and related intolerance of any form.

12. The European Conference draws attention to the importance of collecting and publishing accurate data, broken down by sex and age, on the number and nature of racist and xenophobic incidents or offences, the number of cases prosecuted or the reasons for not prosecuting, and the outcome of prosecutions. The European Conference recommends in this respect that anti-discrimination monitoring services may be established.

Examining the conformity of new and existing legislation with principles of non-discrimination

13. The European Conference encourages participating States to establish mechanisms for examining the conformity of draft legislation with principles of non-discrimination on the basis of race, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, especially in relation to potentially discriminatory effects, including all forms of multiple discrimination, on persons belonging to targeted groups. Concerning existing legislation, the European Conference calls upon participating States to keep their legislative framework under regular review so as to promote equality and guard against any unintended or inadvertent discriminatory impact which may arise. Such legislative appraisal will also help to "mainstream" equality issues.

Positive obligations and impact assessment of legislation as a means of prevention

14. Equal treatment by itself may not be enough if it does not overcome the weight of accumulated disadvantage suffered by persons belonging to targeted groups. The European Conference therefore calls upon participating States to consider introducing legislative and administrative measures which are necessary to prevent and correct situations of inequality. This would mean a positive duty on public authorities to promote equality and to assess the impact of policy, as well as to prevent and punish violations by any person, organisation or enterprise.

Integration

15. The European Conference recalls that human rights and fundamental freedoms apply to all persons on the territories of all States, irrespective of their nationality or legal status. It advocates that participating States aim to ensure that non-nationals to whom residency has been granted - taking account of length of residence - can enjoy the rights necessary for full integration into the host society. It further notes that integration policies should not be subordinate to other policies such as immigration controls. When awarding nationality, participating States must take care never to discriminate on grounds of racial, ethnic or cultural origin.

POLICIES AND PRACTICES

Comprehensive national strategies/action plans, to include mainstreaming the fight against racism in policies and acting in partnership with civil society

16. The European Conference believes it is essential for participating States to recognise that combating racism in all its forms, and the discrimination that ensues, is a primary responsibility of government. It therefore encourages participating States to elaborate comprehensive national policies to promote diversity, equality of opportunity and participation of persons belonging to targeted groups. In elaborating such policies, the European Conference further encourages participating States to establish, or reinforce, dialogue with non-governmental organisations, social partners and researchers and to involve them more closely in designing and implementing policies and programmes. The European Conference calls upon participating States to ensure that public funds are not awarded to companies or other organisations which are not committed to non-discriminatory policies.

Integrating a gender perspective

17. The European Conference underlines the importance of integrating a gender perspective in all actions and policies against racism, xenophobia and related intolerance, of empowering women belonging to targeted groups to demand respect for their rights in all spheres of public and private life and play an active role in the design and implementation of policies and measures which affect their lives.

Effective participation of persons belonging to targeted groups in cultural, social and economic life and in public affairs

18. The European Conference calls upon participating States to create the conditions necessary for the effective participation of persons belonging to targeted groups in decision-making processes. Suitable measures include the creation of joint bodies for consultation between parliaments and local communities of foreign origin, the setting up of integration programmes which encourage the establishment of partnerships between local authorities, associations working in this field and the communities concerned and the design of methods, measures and forms of activity which enable these communities to participate in community life.

Participation of national minorities in decision-making processes

19. The European Conference calls upon participating States to create the conditions necessary for the effective participation of persons belonging to national minorities in decision-making processes at governmental, national and local levels, in accordance with international standards, including the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities. Attention is drawn in this respect to the usefulness, in certain contexts, of creating joint bodies for consultation between national authorities and local communities of national minorities, so that the latter can submit their opinions and proposals on matters concerning them.

Combating discrimination against migrants

20. The European Conference draws attention to the rise in discrimination, intolerance and acts of violence directed against migrants, persons of migrant origin and resident foreign workers. It calls upon participating States to reinforce and implement preventive measures to combat these phenomena and to promote the participation of these groups in the decision-making processes in society.

Role of independent specialised bodies at national, regional and local levels

21. The European Conference underlines the essential contribution of independent specialised bodies at national, regional or local levels in promoting equal treatment irrespective of racial or ethnic origin or religious background. The European Conference points to the range of functions independent specialised bodies may undertake at national, regional and local levels which further government policies in combating racism: offering opinions and advice to government bodies, monitoring the situation in the country, contributing to training programmes for certain key groups, making the general public more aware of discrimination issues and aiding and assisting complainants, including through the provision of legal assistance to enable them to enforce their rights in the courts and other institutions. In some cases, the bodies concerned may hear complaints and applications relating to individual cases and seek a settlement, either by mutual agreement or, within the limits prescribed in law, by legally-binding decisions. It calls upon participating States, as appropriate, to establish such independent specialised bodies, or, in countries where these exist, review and reinforce their effectiveness, while providing them with adequate financial resources, competence and capacity to ensure their effective functioning. It draws attention to *General Policy Recommendation No. 2 of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI)* which sets out the principles for the establishment and functioning of such bodies (see Appendix II to the General Conclusions).

Role of politicians and political parties

22. The European Conference underlines the key role that politicians and political parties can play in combating racism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism and related intolerance, by shaping and leading public opinion. In this respect, it calls upon politicians to provide a clear political message welcoming diversity in European societies and condemning political discourse which

incites or attempts to incite racial and ethnic hatred or prejudice. It encourages political parties in Europe to take concrete steps to promote solidarity, tolerance and respect and to explain issues to the general public in such a way as to increase understanding and acceptance of difference. Such steps may include:

- to sign the *Charter of European political parties for a non-racist society* and follow its principles concerning responsible behaviour on issues of racism, both with regard to the parties' own organisation and to their activities in the political field (see Appendix III);
- to include anti-racist policies in election programmes and to condemn racist exploitation of issues such as immigration and asylum for electoral purposes, ensuring that any candidate for elected office is committed to anti-racist policies;
- to refuse any support, explicit or implicit, to parties that advocate racist and xenophobic positions.

Criminal justice system

23. The European Conference calls upon participating States to take practical measures to make law enforcement officials more sensitive to the situation of targeted groups in order to counter any perceived unfairness in the application of the law and discrimination in the treatment of persons belonging to such groups in the criminal justice system. Such measures may include:

- training courses to promote cultural sensitivity and awareness of prejudice, as well as knowledge of legal aspects of discrimination;
- formal and informal dialogue between the police and targeted groups, for example through confidence-building measures, thereby promoting openness, accountability and mutual trust;
- facilitating access on an equal footing of persons belonging to targeted groups to the police and their auxiliary staff, as well as other professions involved in the criminal justice system, subject to regular review so as to evaluate the levels of recruitment, promotion and retention of staff belonging to targeted groups;
- anti-discriminatory codes of conduct among police forces and other professional groups involved in the administration of justice.

Institutions in the field of employment and social affairs

24. The European Conference notes that good community relations are generally enhanced by social development and the full realisation of economic, social and cultural rights on the basis of non-discrimination. It calls upon participating States to promote policies in employment and the social sphere which seek to improve the prospects of targeted groups facing, for example, the

greatest obstacles in finding, keeping or regaining work, including skilled employment. Particular attention should be paid to persons subject to multiple discrimination. The European Conference draws to the attention of participating States the following considerations:

- policies should be presented so as to enable employers and employees to recognise the benefits of equal opportunity and of diversity;
- the importance of involving the social partners and other non-governmental actors in the design and implementation of training and development programmes;
- public authorities should set an example by making sure they actively seek to recruit and retain persons belonging to targeted groups, which may require reviewing nationality requirements in some instances;
- public officials and all those involved in promoting access to employment should be trained, including by raising their awareness of the barriers to equal opportunity and intercultural sensitivity;
- persons belonging to targeted groups should have access to training, including vocational training, which improves their employability;
- governments can stimulate the development of mission statements, codes of conduct and policies on equal treatment at the workplace aimed at anti-discriminatory practices among employers, service providers and others;
- special attention should be given to protecting foreign domestic workers from discrimination and violence, as well as combating prejudice against them;
- in the field of housing, public and private authorities should promote the successful cohabitation of different social groups at the planning stage of urban development schemes as well as renovate neglected areas of public housing so as to counter social exclusion;
- public authorities should guarantee equal access to health and counselling services without discrimination.

Monitoring

25. The European Conference strongly recommends monitoring all policies and programmes aimed at combating racial discrimination in order to assess their effectiveness in assisting targeted groups. All data should be broken down by sex and age, and information collected should include issues of multiple discrimination. Such statistical data may be complemented by public opinion surveys and also targeted surveys to ascertain the experience and perception of discrimination and racism from the point of view of potential complainants.

Immigration and asylum

26. The European Conference calls upon participating States to promote the positive aspects of immigration among the general public, including by stressing the value of diversity and the contribution made by migrants to society. It underlines that promoting the social inclusion of migrants is a key instrument in combating racism, xenophobia and related intolerance. The European Conference notes that undue stress on restrictive admission/immigration policies may produce negative stereotyping and thus adversely affect persons belonging to targeted groups and the integration of non-nationals. It furthermore recognises the effect arbitrary detention of asylum-seekers and undocumented persons has on the growth of a climate of xenophobia. The European Conference calls for all measures relating to asylum-seekers and refugees to be fully in accordance with the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees.

27. The European Conference underlines that family reunification has a positive effect on integration and calls upon participating States to facilitate family reunion, with due regard to the need for an independent status on the part of family members. The European Conference urges all participating States to grant to asylum-seekers, refugees and migrants access to basic economic and social rights.

Religious discrimination and intolerance

28. The European Conference underlines the importance of promoting understanding, tolerance and respect in matters relating to religion and belief. It recognises that religion and belief may be related to racial and ethnic origin and it may thus be difficult to provide comprehensive protection against discrimination on grounds of racial and ethnic origin without also prohibiting discrimination on grounds of religion and belief. In this respect, the European Conference draws attention to ECRI's *General Policy Recommendation No. 5 on combating intolerance and discrimination against Muslims* (see Appendix IV).

Combating anti-Semitism

29. The European Conference, convinced that combating anti-Semitism is integral and intrinsic to opposing all forms of racism, stresses the necessity of effective measures to address the issue of anti-Semitism in Europe today in order to counter all manifestations of this phenomenon.

Combating discrimination against Roma, Gypsies, Sinti and Travellers

30. The European Conference underlines the necessity for participating States to pay particular attention to and adopt immediate and concrete measures to eradicate the widespread discrimination and persecution targeting Roma, Gypsies, Sinti and Travellers, including through the establishment of structures and processes, in partnership between the public authorities and representatives of the Roma, Gypsies, Sinti and Travellers. The European Conference also draws attention to ECRI's *General Policy Recommendation No. 3 on combating racism and intolerance against Roma/Gypsies* (see Appendix V).

EDUCATION AND AWARENESS-RAISING

Access to education

31. The European Conference calls upon all participating States to commit themselves to ensuring access without discrimination to education, based on respect for human rights, diversity and tolerance. The right to education applies to all children in the territory, irrespective of their legal status. This right also applies to adults in terms of access to life-long learning and education based in the community and workplace.

School and other formal education

32. The European Conference calls upon participating States to introduce, or encourage the introduction of, or reinforce, human rights education, including promoting anti-racism, in the school curriculum and in institutions of higher education. It emphasises that this should be done both in daily activities and in the general functioning of the educational establishment and in the teaching of specific subjects. To this end, teacher-training programmes should incorporate human rights education.

33. The European Conference calls upon participating States to aim at education reflecting a multicultural society, with curricula open to other cultures and school materials based on the diversity of cultures (intercultural education). Education should also enable students to understand the historical, social and economic processes which have led to prejudice towards targeted groups. Educational curricula and materials should also have a broad global perspective which validates worldwide contributions to knowledge and civilisation. In this respect, participating States are requested to review their curricula and text books across all subjects, to ensure that these do not perpetuate stereotypes or prejudices, convey hate and cause racist, ethnic or anti-Semitic animosity, with particular attention to the teaching of history without bias.

34. The European Conference calls upon participating States to ensure that educational institutions implement an agreed policy on equal opportunities and anti-racism, which is regularly reviewed with those working in the school, parents and pupils or students. Such policy should also aim to tackle the interaction between racist and sexist prejudice and stereotypes, including by promoting the active involvement of girls from targeted groups in all equal opportunities' activities. Pupils should be given information about how to deal with racist incidents in schools. Innovative measures, such as pupils acting as peer mediators to address issues of racial violence, should be examined.

35. The European Conference notes that young people from targeted groups are often underrepresented in institutions of higher education and calls for research to be undertaken into barriers to access in this respect.

36. The European Conference recognises that children from different cultural backgrounds may have little knowledge of each other's traditions and family life, which may lead to stereotyping and misinformation. Participating States are urged to promote an increase of knowledge of cultural diversity, for example by facilitating exchange programmes for children in families of different cultural background, in order to overcome ignorance of the lifestyles of others.

37. The European Conference encourages participating States to consider taking measures to increase the recruitment, retention and promotion of women and men belonging to targeted groups, and guarantee effective equality of access, to the teaching profession.

According importance to human rights education

38. The European Conference calls upon participating States to ascribe importance and give priority to human rights education in the formal and informal sectors and the promotion of a human rights culture throughout society. It notes that legislation and policies against racism and intolerance will not be fully effective unless they are complemented by activities which seek to bring about new behaviour and attitudes and increase mutual understanding.

Training of professional groups

39. The European Conference calls upon participating States to introduce, or reinforce, special training programmes to encourage awareness of issues linked to racism and related discrimination, including sexist prejudices, stereotyping and multiple discrimination, among the professionals most frequently in contact with targeted groups. In this respect, the European Conference draws the attention of participating States to the usefulness of codes of conduct or professional ethics.

General awareness-raising campaigns

40. The European Conference calls upon participating States to commit themselves to undertaking public information campaigns or other more long-term initiatives, to alert their societies to the dangers of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, anti-Semitism and related intolerance, and support initiatives of non-governmental organisations in this respect. Such campaigns or initiatives need to be addressed to the whole of society, in particular young people. It also calls upon participating States, in accordance with the proclamation of the year 2001 as the International Year of Mobilization against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance as mandated by the United Nations General Assembly, to commence immediately with public information initiatives to promote anti-racist awareness and action.

41. The European Conference calls upon participating States to facilitate, including in conjunction with local authorities and the relevant professionals, group activities, for example in the cultural, sporting and socio-educational fields, aimed at educating young people in human rights and democratic citizenship and instilling in them values of solidarity, respect and appreciation of diversity.

42. The European Conference calls upon participating States to put experiences of the past, such as slavery, the slave trade and colonialism, into historical perspective allowing for a comprehensive reflection on these events in relation to the roots of racism, racial discrimination and xenophobia in contemporary society, and to ensure a widespread dissemination of this knowledge among young people.

43. The European Conference calls upon all participating States to promote appropriate forms of Holocaust remembrance, including considering the proclamation of an annual Day of Holocaust Remembrance. It also calls for further study of the Holocaust in all its dimensions and the promotion of education about the Holocaust both in and out of schools.

44. Considering the phenomena of genocide, ethnic cleansing and racial segregation, which result in serious international humanitarian crises, the European Conference calls upon participating States to raise awareness of the said phenomena as manifestations of racism, racial discrimination and xenophobia.

45. To provide a sustained and coordinated approach to raising awareness, in schools, among professional groups and the general public, the European Conference notes that creating a source of training expertise in combating racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, anti-Semitism and related intolerance - possibly locating such a source within an existing specialised body - could provide an effective anti-discrimination mechanism. This training expertise should be developed in consultation with targeted groups and should seek to recruit people from targeted groups as trainers.

Role of non-governmental organisations

46. The European Conference welcomes the catalytic role that non-governmental organisations have played in promoting human rights education and raising awareness about racism. It recognises the precarious situation of human rights and anti-racist NGOs in many countries and urges States to lift unnecessary barriers to the functioning of civil society. It calls upon participating States to strengthen cooperation with non-governmental organisations, harnessing their experience and expertise in developing governmental legislation, policies and other initiatives. It also calls upon participating States to provide financial support to human rights education and awareness activities of non-governmental organisations, without compromising their independence.

INFORMATION, COMMUNICATION AND THE MEDIA

Information and communication

47. Information is crucial to the exercise of rights and the principle of transparency. In this respect, the European Conference encourages participating States to set up a service providing free access to public sources of information on the rights of persons who consider themselves victims of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, anti-Semitism and related intolerance.

48. Research, analysis and dissemination of information are also essential to the elaboration of policy and decision-making. The European Conference encourages participating States to collect, record and analyse data concerning racism and related intolerance from a broad range of sources, while endeavouring to establish common indicators and criteria at European level to enable data comparison. Since access to data and transparency in its collection also encourage confidence about the data itself, the European Conference requests participating States to publish and disseminate widely the findings of research into racism and related phenomena. The European Conference furthermore notes that such research can also be conducted in cooperation with European and international institutions and non-governmental organisations. It encourages participating States to take fully into account the recommendations of appropriate monitoring mechanisms at national, European and international levels, including the country-specific approach of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI). In particular, it invites States Parties to the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination to publicise widely their periodic reports to the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, as well as the conclusions and recommendations of the Committee following the consideration of these reports.

49. The European Conference recognises that networks of information are an important tool in the fight against racism and xenophobia. It therefore encourages participating States to organise and support initiatives for regular exchanges of information at local, regional, national and European level as well as to facilitate the role of non-governmental organisations in this respect. It notes that women and men belonging to targeted groups have taken a leading role in networking activities of non-governmental organisations, thus contributing to the empowerment of their groups. All participating States should recognise the importance of community media, in particular community radio, that give a voice to women and men from targeted groups.

Media as a reflection of society

50. The European Conference recognises that media should represent the diversity of multicultural society.

It considers that media enterprises and journalists organisations could reflect on:²

- the importance of the recruitment and presence of journalists from targeted groups in mainstream media, especially television;
- an inclusive coverage of society, using diverse sources of information;
- reporting factually and accurately on acts of racism and intolerance;
- avoiding derogatory stereotypical depiction based on individuals' origins in publications and programme services;

² See also Appendix to Recommendation No. R (97) 21 of the Committee of Ministers to member States of the Council of Europe on the media and the promotion of a culture of tolerance.

- treating individual behaviour without linking it to a person's origin where this is irrelevant;
- depicting society in its cultural, ethnic and religious diversity in a balanced and objective manner and in a way which also reflects the perspectives and outlook of targeted groups;
- presenting a view of cultural diversity and immigration as a structural and positive component of European societies;
- opening the broadcasting system and programmes for intercultural issues;
- alerting public opinion to the dangers of intolerance as well as deepening public understanding and appreciation of all forms of diversity;
- challenging the assumptions underlying racist or xenophobic remarks made by speakers in the course of interviews, reports, discussion programmes, etc;
- developing a multicultural approach to output specifically geared to children and young people so as to enable them to grow up with the understanding that society is enriched by differences.

Codes of conduct and self-regulation

51. Because of the extent of the influence media can exercise and its positive role in raising awareness of issues, and taking into account freedom of expression and the need for media independence, the European Conference encourages media professionals to consider developing self-regulatory codes of conduct with regard to combating racism in the media.

Training

52. The European Conference draws attention to the importance of the initial and in-house training of journalists and media professionals in relation to promoting a culture of tolerance, respect and diversity. Participating States should encourage schools of journalism and media training institutes to highlight this in their core curricula.

Advertising

53. The European Conference draws attention to the power of advertising. In this context, it underlines the usefulness of establishing a code of conduct in the advertising sector which prohibits discrimination on such grounds as race, national or ethnic origin and religion. It furthermore considers that advertisers should also refuse to carry advertising messages which portray cultural, religious or ethnic difference in a negative manner, including by reinforcing sexist or other stereotypes and prejudices.

Role of the Internet

54. The European Conference welcomes the positive contribution the Internet can bring in combating racism through its rapid and wide-reaching communication. It calls upon participating States to examine ways in which the Internet can be used systematically, for example through the creation of a specific site, to provide information about good practices for combating racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, anti-Semitism and related intolerance. It also draws attention to the potential use of the Internet to create educational and awareness-raising networks against racism and intolerance, both in and out of school.

Combating hate speech and racist material on the Internet

55. While recognising the specific characteristics of the Internet, and the obstacles these entail for combating the dissemination of racism on the Internet, the European Conference urges participating States to apply to the extent possible existing legislation for prosecuting those responsible for incitement to racial hatred on the Internet and their accomplices. It further recommends the training of law enforcement authorities in addressing the problem of dissemination of racist material through the Internet.

56. The European Conference draws the attention of participating States to the need to coordinate a prompt international response to the rapidly evolving phenomenon of the dissemination of hate speech and racist material on the Internet. In this respect, it calls for international judicial cooperation to be strengthened and rapid intervention mechanisms to be agreed. More specifically, the European Conference draws to the attention of participating States, with a view to their individual and joint action:

- the need to distinguish between the function of access provider and host provider and their respective responsibilities;
- the importance of including the issue of combating racism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism and intolerance in all current and future work at international level aimed at the suppression of illegal content on the Internet;
- the need for dialogue with all providers, in order to discuss voluntary measures to counter racist sites: such measures could include blocking sites, a filtering system or refusing anonymity to the authors of sites;
- the need to develop codes of conduct and self-regulatory measures among access and host providers.

57. The European Conference furthermore draws the attention of participating States to the need for more active awareness-raising among decision-makers concerning the problem of the dissemination of racist messages through the internet.

D. Cooperation at European and international levels

58. To complement action at national and local levels, the European Conference calls upon participating States, as appropriate, to promote:

- effective legal and judicial cooperation at regional and international levels in combating racism, anti-Semitism and xenophobia to prevent the perpetrators of racist or xenophobic acts from benefiting from the fact that offences are treated differently in various States.
- exchange at European and international levels among national independent specialised bodies and other relevant independent bodies with a remit to monitor racism and racial discrimination;
- exchange at European and international levels among educational authorities and others involved in developing curricula incorporating anti-racist and intercultural education.

Furthermore, the European Conference calls upon participating States, as appropriate, to:

- invite the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights to continue to support States in their fight against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, anti-Semitism and intolerance;
- consider how best to reinforce the action of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI);
- support activities of the European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia (EUMC) to build networks for monitoring and information-sharing, including an inventory of foundations, organisations and networks fighting racism in Europe;
- support the action of the OSCE to combat racism and intolerance, including its High Commissioner on National Minorities, its Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights and its Representative on Freedom of the Media, as well as through its relevant field missions.

59. The European Conference calls upon participating States to include in their national delegations to the World Conference against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance women and youth, as well as to ensure transparency in the constitution of their delegations.

60. The European Conference calls upon participating States, non-governmental organisations and other concerned actors in civil society, bearing in mind the provisions of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, to implement and support United Nations action aimed at combating racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance and to participate actively and constructively in the third World Conference against racism.

16 October 2000

III. GENERAL REPORT

Ladies and gentlemen,

Introduction

A little less than three days ago, when the Secretary General of the Council of Europe welcomed us to this meeting, he quite rightly pointed out that the walls of our common home, which is that of the Greater Europe and the protection of human rights, were originally built to house a great humanist project, namely the construction of a tolerant and democratic European society based on respect for the equal dignity of human beings. Our Conference has been the mirror of this project and it is this prevailing atmosphere that I would like to stress above all here.

The richness of your debates was a clear sign that diversity has something inherently creative about it. This has been the opportunity for Europe to prepare its contribution to the future World Conference against Racism on the basis of its different experiences, which have been regarded not as a burden but as a major asset. Coming from various backgrounds, representing governments, non-governmental organisations, and national institutions for the protection of human rights, you have shown how constructive and positive pluralism, critical-mindedness and debate can be.

I. Context

First point: Acts of racism and racial discrimination are human rights violations. By reminding us that lack of understanding and contempt for human rights have led to acts of barbarism which outrage the human conscience, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights calls on us to respect the equal dignity of all human beings. In its first article it states that all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. In point of fact, racism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism and intolerance pose a mortal danger to human rights. And it is indeed the fundamental rights of victims that are violated. It should also be emphasised that, for the most part, victims undergo double or multiple forms of discrimination.

Second point: The persistence of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and intolerance throughout Europe. These problems endure and expand, taking on various forms. They currently range from the monstrous concept of "ethnic cleansing", and crimes of mass extermination, nothing less than modern-day genocide, to the day-to-day, direct and indirect discrimination which is still the lot of many women and men in Europe, including countries which are proud to call themselves advanced democracies.

Third point: There are areas which are particularly conducive to manifestations of racism and racial discrimination, which might be termed the "grey areas" in the functioning of our democracies. The following are examples:

- The discrepancy between law and practice (between legal instruments and the real-life situation): the failure to apply existing rules against racism and the poor implementation thereof are a constant problem.
- The lack of access to the law: there has been talk of an "unjust justice system", minorities have a genuine lack of confidence in the functioning of the justice system, which they may perceive as insensitive and inaccessible, and the unique position of the victim in cases of racism is not sufficiently taken into account.
- There is still a latent, creeping racism in too many public institutions and the way they function. In this context, problems linked to the attitudes of civil servants, law enforcement and prison officers and the police in general should be treated much more seriously than is presently the case in our countries. It is undoubtedly important to punish such attitudes and forms of behaviour but training is equally necessary. It is essential that these officials be trained to observe human rights and to respect difference, so that they may become, to some extent, effective "human rights protection agents".
- The use of racist and xenophobic arguments in political debate is a scourge that contributes significantly to a climate of hostility in our societies. The rise of extremism poses a real threat. Even more serious is the fact that this situation meets with indifference and even a certain acceptance, whether in the form of unacceptable political deals or the straightforward incorporation of xenophobic arguments into the positions adopted by democratic political parties. It goes without saying that all this is entirely at odds with the conception of society that we defend: a society based on the principles of justice and solidarity. The opinion leaders concerned are playing a very dangerous game because, by seeking out and pinpointing scapegoats, they fuel hatred of difference and put foreigners, immigrants and refugees in an even more vulnerable position. In some of our countries, political extremism is currently contributing to a resurgence of nationalism that results in exclusion.
- This form of political argument is also rooted in underlying anti-Semitism: there are those who use anti-Semitic prejudice, whether implicitly or openly, to further their political interests. We are all aware of the destructive effect of anti-Semitism on democracy. We cannot divorce the fight against anti-Semitism from the fight against all forms of racism, for it is one and the same struggle.
- Religious discrimination is a factor not properly or fully taken into account in the formulation of policies and strategies in the member States. Here, I should like to add a point too often forgotten – that religion should unite us, not divide us. Ultimately, religion can also help to protect human rights. It should not be a source of confrontation.
- The rising incidence of xenophobic behaviour, discrimination, expressions of racism (including racist violence) and widespread intolerance of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers is certainly a matter of urgent concern. Already in 1993, when the Council of Europe's first Declaration on Combating Racism, Xenophobia,

Anti-Semitism and Intolerance was adopted in Vienna, the Heads of State and Government expressed alarm at the increase in acts of violence, instances of degrading treatment and discriminatory practice towards migrants and members of immigrant communities. Seven years on, it has to be acknowledged that far from showing an improvement, the picture is bleaker.

I should like to recall here the point made by Mary Robinson, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, in her admirable opening address, about a "Fortress Europe". Personally, I am convinced that the fortress mentality is not only intolerable but also non-viable in the medium and long term: it is an absurdity demographically, economically and otherwise. The human rights of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers are of key importance in our fight against racism and xenophobia. The economic exploitation of migrants, especially undocumented persons, is unacceptable. Families have a basic right to be reunited: this is a matter of respect for human dignity. The point has to be made loudly and clearly that immigration is not a problem; it is the phenomenon of groups of people moving to our countries and helping to enrich them. These people help to create and consolidate our countries' wealth. That fact has to be acknowledged in the interests of justice, respect and solidarity.

Indeed, the Forum of Non-Governmental Organisations, held immediately before the Conference, decided to include a fifth theme on its agenda, in addition to the four conference themes: namely, immigration and asylum. The fight here is for equal rights, above all economic and social rights. It is also about moving toward successful integration involving civil and political rights, including the right of non-nationals resident in a country (whatever their nationality) to vote in local elections.

Lastly, a group particularly exposed to racism throughout Europe is the Roma/Gypsies. Their fundamental rights are currently violated or threatened on a regular basis. They are the victims of persistent prejudice and sometimes the target of racist violence. Our duty of memory in Europe also gives us a duty to be vigilant: we must not forget that, in our recent past, many Roma/Gypsies have perished as the result of policies of racist persecution and extermination. Historically there has been systematic discrimination against Roma/Gypsies, and discrimination against them today in many social and economic contexts is driving them into social exclusion. Access to education is vitally important here: it is the key in the Roma/Gypsies' progress towards equality.

II. Solutions – examples of good practice

So what can be done to address the picture I have painted? What are the possible or existing solutions? What types of good practice should be supported and developed?

The conference working groups discussed these questions and came up with ideas, examples and proposals. The rapporteurs outlined these to you yesterday and you will find them in the written reports, already available, which will form an integral part of the European regional contribution to the World Conference. I will highlight here only some of the many points made.

First and foremost I want to underline the importance of prevention. I subscribe to the school that prefers prevention to punishment (although, of course, there must also be provision for sanctions to be imposed).

The first point to be made about prevention concerns rules and, in particular, legal and political guarantees. The Conference unequivocally welcomed the latest advances in European law in this respect. The adoption of Protocol No. 12 to the European Convention on Human Rights and the recent Community Directive on equal treatment between persons irrespective of racial or ethnic origin are positive steps. Slowly but surely, Europe is completing the armoury of legal instruments needed to prohibit racial discrimination. Its efforts are, of course, complementary to the worldwide protection machinery. The International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination remains the cornerstone at international level.

Completing anti-discrimination legislation at national level remains a priority. It is incredible - but true - that in the year 2000 not all European countries possess such legislation.

No matter what laws are passed, nothing will change until the law is properly applied and fully enforced. Genuine political will is also required at national and supra-national level to turn the letter of the law into a reality that is part of everyone's experience. An example of very good practice that might usefully be followed is the establishment of specialised bodies to combat racism and intolerance at national level. Whether they take the form of a commission, an ombudsman's office or a specialist centre, and whether they focus on racism or form part of larger bodies with a brief to promote and protect human rights, such mechanisms are essential complements to the law and contribute to its implementation.

A final comment on this point: whatever anti-discrimination laws are passed and whatever measures are taken to combat racism, certain negative trends will never be reversed until positive steps are taken to improve the situation of those women and men affected by racial discrimination and/or multiple discrimination.

Particularly important here are: the development and exchange of good practice with regard to combating discrimination in employment and housing; the role of the social partners; and the effective involvement of employers and trade unions in addressing workplace discrimination.

Prevention also works through education. Education for human rights should occupy a much more important place in our education systems. Instead of being treated as a separate minor subject, it should be present right across the curriculum, injecting a human rights component into the teaching of every subject. What society needs is a "human rights culture". Intercultural education, a more thoughtful approach to history teaching and an effort to make schools places of education against racism are all aspects to be studied and reinforced.

Nothing will be accomplished without the involvement of civil society. For that reason, strengthening civil society and supporting the work of non-governmental organisations are basic steps in the fight against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance.

We heard yesterday that the media play a crucial role in identity building. It is true that they are an integral part of our lives. As such, they are often criticised for certain negative aspects of their operating methods but the media can also make a substantial positive contribution to tackling racism. They are often fundamentally important tools in anti-racist work. New technologies, and particularly the Internet, are powerful forces for cultural *rapprochement* and thus help combat racism. The Internet and other media can also play a negative role, however, when they are used to disseminate racism and hatred. In such cases, we must react and protect ourselves. It is true that there are currently loopholes in the law because technology advances faster than lawyers can deliberate. Given that the problem has to be resolved at global level, we must hope that it is not overlooked at the forthcoming World Conference.

I should like to conclude by emphasising how impressed I have been by the depth of the will, at European and international level, to combat racism, racial discrimination, anti-Semitism, xenophobia and related intolerance. Indeed, I wonder whether, on occasion, advances in awareness, law and practice at national and local level are not stimulated "from the top down". That will has been palpable over the last few days. In recent years it has also brought some important projects to fruition and been responsible for practical achievements including such successful initiatives as the European Union's Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia, whose work we appreciate.

Finally, I should like to pay tribute to our own European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) for its remarkable work, and urge it to demonstrate that it has the strength of spirit, the will and the determination to go on fighting for justice and equality among all human beings.

In a year's time, the World Conference against racism will be taking place. Our message will not be one of self-satisfaction, but one which recognises our problems. Nor will it be a message of resignation, but one instead of determination to combat racism, racial discrimination, anti-Semitism, xenophobia and related intolerance.
